

## REPORT TO ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

<b>Open/Exempt</b>				
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Lead Officer: Charlotte Marriott E-mail: <a href="mailto:charlotte.marriott@west-norfolk.gov.uk">charlotte.marriott@west-norfolk.gov.uk</a>			Other Officers consulted: Electoral Services Manager Monitoring Officer Chief Executive	
Financial Implications YES	Policy/Personnel Implications YES	Statutory Implications YES	Equality Impact Assessment req'd YES	Risk Management Implications YES

Date of Meeting: 8 January 2026

### **Decision on whether to proceed with a Community Governance Review (CGR) for the unparished area of King's Lynn.**

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

1. The Electoral Arrangements Committee endorse the undertaking of a Community Governance Review for the unparished area of King's Lynn, pending Full Council decision.
2. The Electoral Arrangements Committee review and agree the draft Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review, pending Full Council approval to commence the CGR.

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Chief Executive will bring forward a report to Full Council in January 2026 requesting that a Community Governance Review (CGR) be commenced for the unparished area of King's Lynn. It is Full Council's function and discretion to decide whether to undertake a CGR or not.
- 1.2 In anticipation of that Full Council decision, the Committee is asked whether it endorses the proposal to commence a CGR for the unparished area of King's Lynn and to consider proposed draft Terms of Reference. On the latter, recommendations to Full Council are conditional upon the commencement of CGR being approved.
- 1.3 This report outlines the process that will be followed and draft Terms of Reference for the CGR, should Full Council approve the commencement of the CGR for King's Lynn.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 As part of our response to the Devolution White Paper (December 2024) and the subsequent requirement to move to a single tier local government model in Norfolk through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk—together with five other Norfolk district, borough, and city councils—submitted the proposal *Future Norfolk: The Strength of Three*. This proposal advocates the creation of three unitary councils for Norfolk (East, West, and Greater Norwich), accompanied by a comprehensive programme of service delivery reforms.
- 2.2 Part of this submission included a proposal for full parishing across West Norfolk, which means we should consider establishing a Parish Council for the currently unparished area of King's Lynn.

*A new Town Council for King's Lynn will ensure residents have direct, place-based representation and will enable the continuation of the historic Mayoralty. [Local Government Reorganisation: The Proposal for West Norfolk](#)*

## 3. Community Governance Review (CGR) Process

- 3.1 The CGR process is set out in The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIHA 2007). CGRs are reviews of the whole or part of a district/borough area to consider creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes, including the electoral arrangements for parish councils. This means making sure that those living in the area, and other interested groups, have a say in how their local communities are represented. The LGPIHA 2007 requires that local people are consulted during the CGR process, that representations received in connection with the review are considered and that steps are taken to notify residents of the outcomes of the review.
- 3.2 Commencing a CGR does not guarantee the creation of a new Parish Council, it is simply a review of community governance with a focus on improving community engagement, community cohesion, providing better local democracy and should result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.
- 3.3 Overview of the CGR process and indicative timeframe, if Full Council resolve to commence a CGR for King's Lynn:

Stage	Approx. dates	Description
1	January 2026	The Terms of Reference set out the extent and framework of the review. These must be approved by Full Council and then published. Once published, the CGR can then formally start.

2	9 February – 27 March 2026	<b>Consultation 1</b> Following publication of the Terms of Reference, the Council undertakes a consultation. Residents in the affected areas, along with elected representatives at all levels, are invited to respond and give their views of community governance in the affected area. This part of the consultation focusses on whether residents want a Town (Parish) Council for King's Lynn and what the potential electoral arrangements may be (e.g. existing Borough Council ward boundaries will be transferred to any new parish, as set by the LGBCE)
3	23 March – 29 May 2026	<b>Development of draft recommendations</b> Following the consultation, Officers will develop draft recommendations and present these to Full Council for approval. These will take the consultation responses into account, along with the statutory criteria, government guidance and best practice.
4	15 June – 31 July 2026	<b>Consultation 2</b> Once approved by Full Council, the Draft Recommendations are published, and a second public consultation commences. This sets out the specific recommendations and invites responses to support or disagree with them.
5	August 2026 <i>Note: School holiday/staff leave</i>	<b>Formulation of final recommendations</b> Taking responses to the consultation into account, the Final Recommendations are developed by Officers.
6	September 2026	<b>Final recommendations and Reorganisation Order made</b> The Final Recommendations considered by the Electoral Arrangements Committee and Full Council. <i>Note: budget will need to be agreed at this stage, so it can be included in the Reorganisation Order.</i>  Order made and sealed: The legal Order puts any changes into place <i>Note: the order should take effect on the 1 April following the date on which it is made.</i> <i>The principal council may wish to consider whether, during the period between 1 April and the first elections to the parish council, it should make interim arrangements for the parish to be represented by councillors who sit on the principal council</i>
8	October/ November 2026 – April 2027	<b>Establish an implementation steering group</b> <i>(if a new parish is to be created an Implementation Steering Group should be established to appoint an interim parish clerk, and develop a draft constitution etc)</i>
9	May 2027	<b>Parish Council for King's Lynn established.</b> <i>Note: at the first meeting the newly established Parish Council may declare itself a Town Council.</i>
10	May 2027	<b>Elections</b>

*Note: the above timetable is subject to change and is likely to require meetings of the Electoral Arrangements Committee and Full Council to be rearranged, or the scheduling of an extraordinary Full Council meeting.*

- 3.4 If Full Council resolve to undertake the CGR in January 2026 (with the CGR process commencing in February 2026), it is estimated that final recommendations and the Reorganisation Order can be made by September 2026, and that the new Town Council could be established in May 2027.
- 3.5 Attached at Appendix 1 are the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for King's Lynn, under which the CGR would be undertaken. The terms of reference specify the area under review and set out the matters on which the review is to focus. The Electoral Arrangements Committee are asked to endorse the draft ToR, pending Full Council consideration and decision.
- 3.6 If commencement of a CGR is approved by Full Council, we are required under section 79 of the LGPIHA 2007 to notify Norfolk County Council of our intentions to undertake the review and the agreed Terms of Reference. We should also seek the views of Norfolk County Council at an early stage of the CGR process.

#### **4 Options and risks**

- 4.1 **Option 1:** Do nothing – do not initiate a CGR. Once the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk is abolished under the Structural Change Order (SCO) required as part of Local Government Reorganisation, this would risk losing the historic Mayoralty, other ceremonial functions and ceremonial assets currently owned by the Borough Council, unless a Charter Trustee body is formed by way of the SCO. It would also not address the current democratic deficit. Once the Unitary Council model is in place, without a Parish Council residents may not have direct, place-based representation. **Not recommended.**
- 4.2 **Option 2:** Delay initiating the CGR - this would mean the establishment of the Parish Council would be left for the successor authority, there would be no obligation for them to do so. There would be no opportunity for us to shape the new Parish Council to ensure effective and smooth transition of responsibility and assets, and, again, risk losing the Mayoralty. **Not recommended.**
- 4.3 **Option 3:** Commit to interim arrangements – Charter Trustees are a legal mechanism used in England to preserve the civic traditions of a former borough or city when its local council is abolished, and no successor parish or town council is created. The Charter Trustees would have no power in respect of general functions or services but would be responsible for ensuring the continuation of any ceremonial elements of the town, including a Mayor. A CGR would not be required, the Charter Trustees would need to be included in the SCO, as part of the LGR process. **Not recommended, unless option 4 is not achievable.**

- 4.4 **Option 4:** Initiate the CGR as soon as possible – whilst this does not guarantee the establishment of a new Parish Council for King’s Lynn, this is the recommended approach. There are risks associated with this due to the short timeframe, and concurrent LGR legislation being brought before Parliament. The final recommendations must be agreed, and the Reorganisation Order must be made and sealed before the SCO comes into effect (there will possibly be a section in the SCO that will prevent us from making the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order). The SCO is expected to be laid before Parliament sometime between September and November 2026, however, it is not yet known when it will come into effect or the precise content of the SCO.

If it is not possible to make the Reorganisation Order before the SCO comes into effect and we enter the transition period, then the making of the final Reorganisation Order would be for the successor authority (again, there would be no obligation for them to do this). An indicative timeframe for the CGR is included at 3.4, however it should be noted that this will require dedicated resources that we do not currently have. **If this option is not achievable, then option 3 would be recommended.**



# Terms of Reference

## King's Lynn Unparished Area Community Governance Review

**February 2026**

### 1. Introduction

The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk wishes to explore the possibility of undertaking a Community Governance Review (CGR) under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to establish whether or not there is a desire from residents for the emparishment of all or part of the current unparished area of King's Lynn into one or more civil parishes. This is consequential of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which will see the formation of one or more unitary authorities for Norfolk, and the abolition of the existing six District and Borough Councils, single City Council, and single County Council within Norfolk.

### 2. Legal Framework

In undertaking this review the Council will be guided by:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended)
- the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972
- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008
- Equality Act 2010 to ensure fair public functions
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008.

### **3. What is a Community Governance Review (CGR)?**

Commencing a CGR does not guarantee the creation of a new civil parish and associated Parish Council; it is simply a review of community governance with a focus on improving community engagement, community cohesion, providing better local democracy and should result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

A CGR is a review of the whole or part of the Borough to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
- Constituting, retaining or dissolving parish councils
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election, council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and
- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping.

### **4. Why undertake a Community Governance review?**

A CGR provides an opportunity for principal authorities to review and make changes to community governance within their area. Such reviews can be undertaken when there have been changes in population or in reaction to specific, or local, new issues to ensure that the community governance for the area continues to be effective and convenient and it reflects the identities and interests of the community.

The government has emphasised that ultimately, recommendations made in a CGR ought to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

If the current proposals for local government reorganisation in the county proceed, existing six District and Borough Councils, single City Council, and single County Council will be dissolved upon Vesting Day on 1 April 2028. At present, there are no parishes in the whole of the Borough of King's Lynn, and when the Borough Council is dissolved and transitions to the new organisation, there will be no lower tier of local government below that of the new unitary authority. This will affect democratic engagement and representation and may influence the way local services are provided, and not permit for a local, civic, mayoral presence and the associated ceremonial duties.

The Council is considering commencing a CGR for the existing unparished area of King's Lynn, to establish the appetite, desire and suitability for the potential establishment of one or more civil parishes and associated parish

councils within the Borough. To achieve this, the Council shall follow the Governance Framework for the administration of CGR processes, which was passed by Cabinet on 21 July 2025 and due to the future reorganisation of local government in Norfolk, shall request that Members consider whether or not to undertake a Community Governance Review as per the report recommendation to the Electoral Arrangements Committee on 8 January 2026 and then at Full Council on 29 January 2026.

## **5. Considerations of a Community Governance Review**

Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires the Borough Council to consider the need to secure that community governance within the area under review, will be:

- a) reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- b) is effective and convenient.

In doing, so the review will take into account:

- a) the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- b) the size, population and boundaries of the local community.

## **6. Scope of this Review**

As part of the [Future Norfolk Local Government Review Business Case for West Norfolk](#), the Borough Council and its partners propose Full emparishment as a Governance Model across West Norfolk, building on the strong civic infrastructure already in place. “Every part of West Norfolk is currently covered by town or parish councils except for the town of King’s Lynn. LGR presents an opportunity to address this democratic deficit. A new Town (Parish) Council for King’s Lynn will ensure residents have direct, place-based representation and will enable the continuation of the historic Mayoralty”. Therefore, the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk has informally resolved to undertake a CGR to consider whether there is a desire and need to create one or more civil parishes and associated parish councils for the unparished area of King’s Lynn.

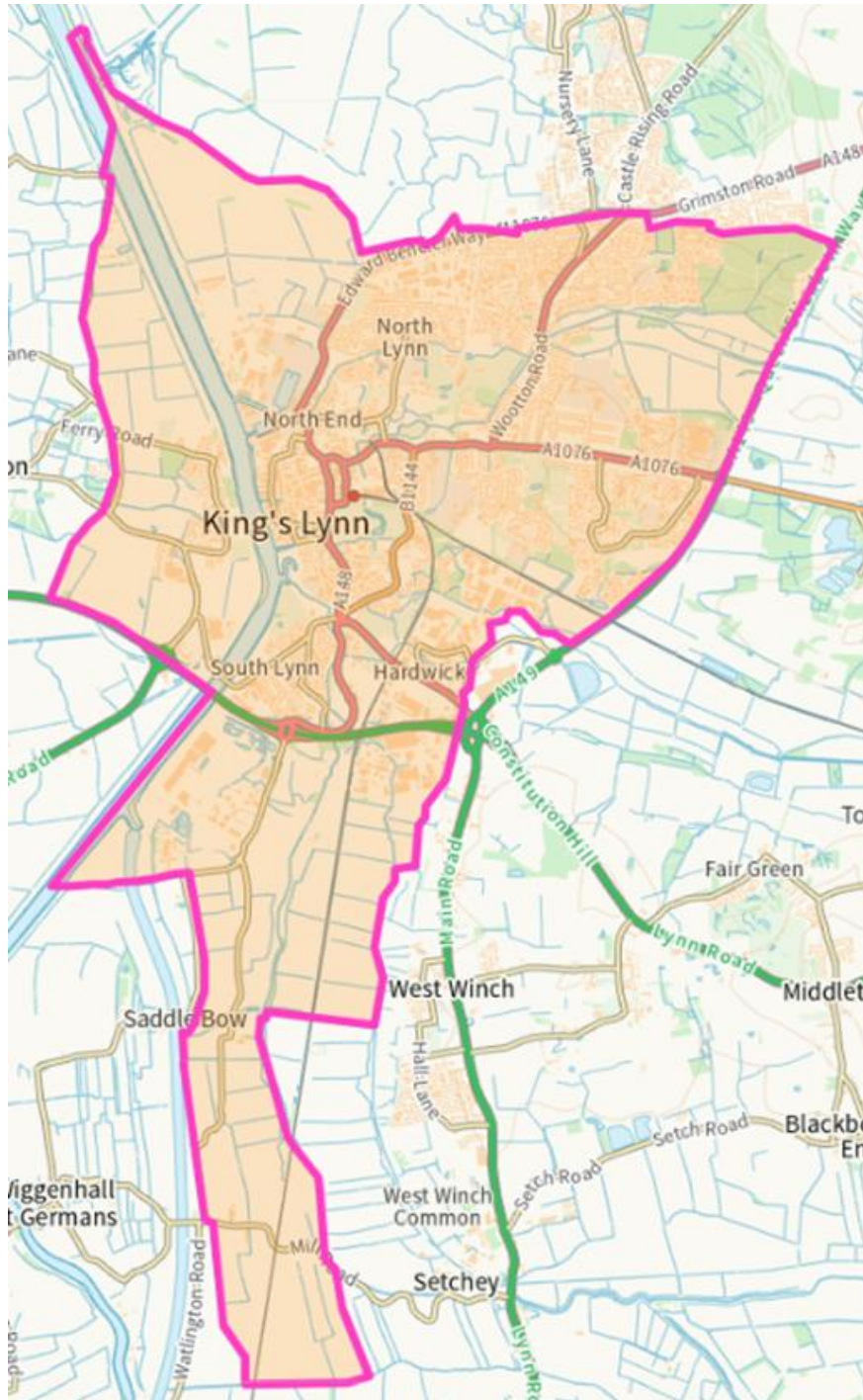
This review seeks to ascertain the most appropriate boundary alignment and governance arrangements for any such new parish. The areas affected within the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, includes the following existing wards:



	<b>Borough Wards</b> <i>(Polling Districts)</i>	<b>Electorate</b> (1 Dec 2025)	<b>Properties</b> (1 Dec 2025)
1	(PE1, PF1) <b>North Lynn</b>	4,272	2,942
2	(PC1, PC2, PC3) <b>Gaywood North Bank</b>	6,412	3,846
3	(PJ1, PJ2, PJ3, PM1) <b>St. Margaret's with St. Nicholas</b>	3,833	3,593
4	(PK1, PL1, PL2) <b>Gaywood Chase</b>	1,923	1,282
5	(PB1, PB2) <b>Gaywood Clock</b>	2,170	1,559
6	(PA1, PA2) <b>Springwood</b>	2,094	1,189
7	(PD1, PD2) <b>Fairstead</b>	4,311	2,886
8	(PG1, PH1) <b>South &amp; West Lynn</b>	3,650	2,376

In conducting this review, the Council will consider the electorate forecasts for the next five years. These forecasts will be based on planned developments within the Borough and will also consider any forecasts relating to demographic trends.

If parish councils are not established across the whole area of the existing Borough, then the only tier of local government that electors in unparished areas will be represented by will be the new unitary authority for that area.



\*\* OS Map of unemparished area of King's Lynn, 2025 \*\*

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## 7. Who will undertake the community governance review?

The review will be carried out by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. If commencement of a CGR is approved by Full Council, the Borough Council is required under section 79 of the LGPIHA 2007 to notify the County Council of its intentions to undertake the review and these agreed Terms of Reference. Therefore, the Borough Council shall seek the views of County Council at an early stage of the CGR process. The

conduct of the review will be overseen by the Borough Council, with all formal decisions required by the legislation being made by the Borough Council in line with the Council's constitution.

The review will comply with the legislative and procedural requirements set out in the 2007 Act, as well as statutory guidance. This includes guidance produced jointly by the former Department for Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) and issued under section 100 of the 2007 Act.

Should the Borough Council's Full Council resolve to undertake the CGR in January 2026, it is estimated that final recommendations and the Reorganisation Order can be made by September 2026, and that a new Parish/Town Council could be established in May 2027.

This review will follow the approach set out in these Terms of Reference, including the following indicative timetable:

## 7.1 Timetable for review

Stage	Approx. dates	Description
1	January 2026	The Terms of Reference set out the extent and framework of the review. These must be approved by Full Council and then published. Once published, the CGR can then formally start.
2	9 February – 27 March 2026	<b>Consultation 1</b> Following publication of the Terms of Reference, the Council undertakes a consultation. Residents in the affected areas, along with elected representatives at all levels, are invited to respond and give their views of community governance in the affected area. This part of the consultation focusses on whether residents want a Town (Parish) Council for King's Lynn and what the potential electoral arrangements may be (e.g. existing Borough Council ward boundaries will be transferred to any new parish, as set by the LGBCE)
3	23 March – 29 May 2026	<b>Development of draft recommendations</b> Following the consultation, Officers will develop draft recommendations and present these to Council for approval. These will take the consultation responses into account, along with the statutory criteria, government guidance and best practice.
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5	August 2026 <i>Note: School holiday/staff leave</i>	<b>Formulation of final recommendations</b> Taking responses to the consultation into account, the Final Recommendations are developed by Officers.

6	September 2026	<b>Final recommendations and Reorganisation Order made</b> The Final Recommendations considered by the Electoral Arrangements Committee and Full Council. <i>Note: budget will need to be agreed at this stage, so it can be included in the Order.</i>  Order made and sealed: The legal Order puts any changes into place <i>Note: the order should take effect on the 1 April following the date on which it is made.</i> <i>The principal council may wish to consider whether, during the period between 1 April and the first elections to the parish council, it should make interim arrangements for the parish to be represented by councillors who sit on the principal council.</i>
8	October/ November 2026 – April 2027	<b>Establish an implementation steering group</b> (if a new parish is to be created an Implementation Steering Group should be established to appoint an interim parish clerk, and develop a draft constitution etc)
9	May 2027	<b>Parish Council for King's Lynn established.</b> <i>Note: at the first meeting the newly established Parish Council may declare itself a Town Council.</i>
10	May 2027	<b>Elections</b>

\*\* Timetable subject to change \*\*

## 8. Consultation

Before publishing final recommendations, in line with legislative requirements, the Borough Council will seek and take full account of the views of local people. The Council will comply with legislative requirements by,

- a) consulting local government electors for the area under review;
- b) consulting any other person or body (including a local authority or elected representative) who appears to the council to have an interest in the review;
- c) informing Norfolk County Council of the review, and sending it a copy of this Terms of Reference document;
- d) taking into account any representations received in connection with the review.
- e) the Council will also be pleased to receive comments from any other person or body that wishes to make representations; any such person that makes representations during the initial invitation to submit proposals will be invited to make comments in respect of the draft proposals.

When taking account of written representations, the Council is bound to have regard to the need to secure that community governance within the area

under review is:

- a) reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- b) effective and convenient

To ensure that this review is conducted transparently, as soon as is practicable, the Council will publish its recommendations and take such steps as it considers sufficient to ensure that persons who may be interested in the review are informed of the recommendations and the reasons behind them.

This will consist of two phases of consultation. The first will seek the initial views and desires of residents, groups and stakeholders, and will form the basis of the draft recommendations. The second phase will seek views upon those draft recommendations, to allow final recommendations to be formed.

Consultation and awareness raising will consist of various communication methods, such as website news updates, direct mailings, media posts (digital and printed), and each will explain how residents and stakeholders can submit their views. The communications shall be accessible to ensure that everyone, can participate.

## **9. The value of local councils**

Local parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level and we want to ensure that local governance in the area of the existing Borough Council continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it.

Parish councils have a key role to play in representing the views and promoting the needs of the borough's local communities and neighbourhoods and every opportunity should be afforded to them to express such views to the new unitary authority prior to any decisions taken which might affect local circumstances.

## **10. Other (non-parish) forms of community governance**

The Council is required by law to consider other forms of community governance. There may be other arrangements for community representation or community engagement in an area, including area committees, neighbourhood management programmes, tenant management organisations, area or community forums, residents' and tenants' associations or community associations, which may be more appropriate to some areas than parish councils.

The Council will be mindful of such other forms of community governance in its consideration of whether parish governance is most appropriate. However, the Council also notes that what sets parish councils apart from other kinds of governance is the fact that they are a democratically elected tier of local government with directly elected

representatives, independent of other council tiers and budgets, and possessing specific powers for which they are democratically accountable.

## **11. Parish boundaries**

The Council considers that 'natural' settlements, or settlements as they are defined in the Local Development Framework, should not in normal circumstances be partitioned by parish boundaries. The Council considers that the boundaries between parishes should where possible either reflect the 'no-man's land' between communities represented by areas of low population or by identifiable physical barriers. These physical barriers might include natural boundaries such as rivers or man-made features such as railways or roads. In the event of emparishment the council will endeavour to select boundaries that are, and are likely to remain, easily identifiable as well as taking into account any local ties which might be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

## **12. Electoral arrangements and councillor representation**

An important part of the Review will be to consider the 'Electoral Arrangements' and this will cover how a council is constituted for any parish established by this review, comprising the following:

- The ordinary year in which elections are held;
- The number of Councillors to be elected to the council;
- The division (or not) of the parish into wards for the purpose of electing Councillors;
- The number and boundaries of any such wards;
- The number of Councillors to be elected for any such wards; and
- The name of any such wards.

The Local Government Act 1972 states that ordinary election of Parish Councillors shall take place every fourth year. However, parish elections may be held in other years to coincide with the cycle for the principal Council, so that the costs of elections can be shared. If the Review finds that it will be appropriate to hold an election for Parish Councillors, for a newly formed parish, at an earlier date than the next scheduled ordinary elections, the terms of office of any newly elected Parish Councillors will be so reduced as to enable the electoral cycle to revert to the normal cycle in the area at the next ordinary elections.

The number of Parish Councillors for the parish council must not be less than five. There is no maximum number and there are no rules relating to the allocation of Councillors. There are, however, guidelines produced both by

the National Association of Local Councils and by the Aston Business School and the Council will be mindful of these during the review. The Government's guidance is that "each area should be considered on its own merits, having regard to its population, geography and the pattern of communities."

### **13. Consequential Matters**

A Reorganisation Order may cover any consequential matters that appear to the Council to be necessary or proper to give effect to the Order. These may include:

- The transfer and management or custody of property;
- The setting of precepts for new parishes;
- Provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities;
- Provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters, as necessary.

In these matters, the Council will be guided by the 2007 Act and the Regulations that have been issued under it, including the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 and the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008.

Regulations regarding the transfer of property, rights and liabilities require that any apportionments shall use the population of the area as estimated by the Proper Officer of the Council as an appropriate proportion. The Regulations regarding the establishment of a precept for a new parish require the Council to calculate the first anticipated precept for a newly constituted parish council and for the amount of that precept to be included in the Reorganisation Order.

### **14. How to contact us**

If you would like to say how you view potential future arrangements under these Terms of Reference, please respond to the online consultations on the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council website: **[...LINK...]**

If you are not able to complete the online consultation, please email [cgr@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:cgr@west-norfolk.gov.uk), or call 01553 616200.

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